

In this way omniscient awarenesses realize each object in a manner that is appropriate to that object. Ultimate truths are always directly realized by way of a vanishing of dualistic appearances, and conventional truths are always realized in association with dualistic appearances. Buddhas' omniscient minds distinguish every single conventional truth dualistically without rising from the non-dualistic equipoise realizing the ultimate truth. Hence, omniscient consciousnesses are able to realize both truths because they are able to apply two different modes of cognition simultaneously.

The term 'dualistic appearance' has various meanings. 'Dualistic appearance' can refer to the appearance of inherent existence, to the appearance of conventional truths, to the appearance of subject and object being different, and so forth. Here in this context 'dualistic appearance' refers to the appearance of conventional truths and to the appearance of subject and object being different. Regarding the latter appearance, Buddhas' omniscient minds realize the ultimate truths non-dualistically because they directly realize emptiness by way of a vanishing of the appearance of the subject (the omniscient mind) and the object (the ultimate truth) being different. Thus, the realization of emptiness is compared to pouring water into water. At the same time, Buddhas' minds realize the varieties of conventional truths dualistically because they directly realize them by way of having the appearance of subject and object being different. Since conventionalities are manifold and multi-faceted, perception of them entails such dualistic appearance.

Lama Tsongkhapa says in his ***Ocean of Reasoning***:

*[The passage from the **Introduction to the Two Truths Sutra**] explains that when the term "ultimate truth" is used, [ultimate truth] is not seen by way of subject and object appearing distinctly to awareness. Thus, it is a source [proving] the absence of dualistic appearance; it is not a source [proving] that a Buddha does not realize the ultimate.*

It is important to understand that even though Buddhas' omniscient awarenesses realize conventional truths by way of an association with dualistic appearances, conventional truths do not appear to them to exist inherently.

Regarding the direct realization of emptiness, there is a famous quote which Lama Tsongkhapa cites in the ***Illumination of the Thought***: "Not seeing is excellent seeing". The meaning of this quote is similar to the quote from Chandrakirti's ***Auto-commentary on the Supplement of the Middle Way***: "Seeing by way of not seeing."

The ***Condensed Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*** explains direct and explicit realization of emptiness by way of an example:

*"Not seeing forms and also not seeing feelings;  
Neither seeing discriminations nor intentions;  
He who does not see [sense] consciousnesses and mental minds,  
He sees reality", thus the Tathagatha reveals.*

*Sentient beings express in words: "I see space",  
So it must be examined how they see space.  
In the same way the seeing of reality is revealed by the Tathagatha;  
This sight cannot be expressed through any other analogy.*

This sutra says that the meaning of the Buddha's explanation that emptiness is "seen by way of not seeing" conventional truths such as forms, feelings and so forth, can be understood by reflecting on what it means when someone says s/he sees space. Here space does not refer to impermanent space which can be directly perceived by an eye consciousness, but to 'uncompounded space'. Uncompounded space is a permanent phenomenon and a non-affirming negative, for it is the mere absence of a negated factor (object of negation). The negated factor is 'obstructive contact'. This type of space is everywhere, even where solid objects exist, for without the absence of obstructive contact obstructive objects could not be there in the first place. For instance, a cup can be placed on a saucer only when on that saucer there is uncompounded space, that is, when on that saucer there is the absence of obstructive contact. If there was obstructive contact the cup would be obstructed from being placed on the saucer.

Therefore, emptiness and uncompounded space are similar in that they are both the mere absence of a negated factor (an object of negation). The negated factor/object of negation of emptiness is inherent existence, and the negated factor/object of negation of uncompounded space is obstructive contact.

Furthermore, just as one “sees space” by not seeing obstructive contact, one sees emptiness by not seeing conventional truths.

**The way in which Buddhas realize conventional truths by way of ‘other appearance’:**

Lama Tsongkhapa says in his ***Illumination of the Thought***:

*It is not that a Buddha’s knower of the varieties [of conventional truths] perceives the aggregates, etc. through being tainted by the imprints of ignorance. However, what appears to other person’s consciousnesses, which are tainted by ignorance, must appear to a Buddha.*

Lama Tsongkhapa says in his ***Ocean of Reasoning***:

*When objects tainted by imprints of ignorance appear to a Buddha’s exalted wisdom knowing the varieties, they appear to a Buddha only through their appearance to persons who have taints of ignorance. They do not appear to a Buddha’s own perspective without relying on such an appearance to others.*

Conventional truths which are tainted by imprints of ignorance appear to Buddha’s omniscient minds via the appearance of such conventional truths to sentient beings’ minds. Thus, Buddhas’ awarenesses do not cognize those conventional phenomena as their ‘own appearance’ but as ‘other appearance’, i.e. by way of the appearance to other minds that are affected by the imprints of ignorance. In other words, conventional truths which are tainted by imprints of ignorance only appear to Buddhas because they appear to sentient beings.

However, the appearances of conventional truths to Buddhas’ minds are stripped of the appearance of inherent existence. Hence, consciousnesses in Buddhas’ continua are unaffected by the mistaken appearances of sentient beings’ minds. At the same time, Buddhas perceive the *appearance* of inherent existence to sentient beings’ awarenesses.

Please note, that even though ‘inherent existence’ does not exist, the ‘*appearance* of inherent existence’ does and is therefore cognized by omniscient awarenesses. This is similar to the analogy of the person who suffers from an eye disease which causes him to see falling hairs. Even though the falling hairs do not exist the *appearance* of falling hairs exists.

**The two exalted wisdoms in the continua of sentient beings and Buddhas:**

As explained previously (Handout 27, page 1), until one has eliminated the residual imprints of the mistaken dualistic appearances, that is, the imprints of ignorance etc. which cause one to have the mistaken appearance of inherent existence, one will not be able to directly and explicitly realize the two truths simultaneously. Hence in the mental continua of sentient beings who have not overcome such cognitive obscurations, the exalted wisdom of meditative equipoise and the exalted wisdom of subsequent attainment are contradictory and therefore different natures (different entities). In the continua of Buddhas, on the other hand, the two exalted wisdoms are equivalent and one nature (one entity).

This explanation does not contradict [the ***Auto-commentary on the Two Truths***] that says:

*Even a single moment of an exalted knower  
Pervades the entire field of knowledge*

Even though the two exalted wisdoms are one nature, there is not the slightest contradiction in the omniscient mind of a Buddha applying two different modes of cognition of the two truths which is a distinctive quality of a Buddha.

This concludes the explanation of the two truths according to Chandrakirti’s ***Supplement to the Middle Way*** and Lama Tsongkhapa’s ***Illumination of the Thought***.

